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Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Twenty-second session of the Commission/ thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
23 - 27 April 1987

Item 6 of the provisional agenda**

LC/NAIRCR

REPORT OF THE SIXTH UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

Executive Summary

* E/ECA/TPCW.8/1.
** E/ECA/CM.13/1.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa which was held in November 1986, at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was convened in accordance with resolution 1 of the fifth Conference. It was attended by representatives from 30 member States, 12 observer countries and 10 international and governmental organizations, including United Nations agencies.

2. The Conference had as its theme "Cartography for Development" and it addressed issues necessary for rapid implementation of the relevant strategies of the Lagos Plan of Action in manpower development and strengthening capacities towards self-reliance in cartography and remote sensing in Africa. It also reviewed the status of cartography in Africa and mapped out ways of accelerating the attainment of homogeneity and total map coverage at basic topographical map scales for Africa.

II. WORK OF THE CONFERENCE

3. Three technical committees were set up to deal with the various specialized fields, while the plenary sessions covered general policy matters.

4. The Conference dealt in depth with questions related to the integrated continental geodetic and gravimetric networks in Africa, and the Conference unanimously adopted a standardized set of specifications for topographical maps in Africa. With regard to modalities and the politics of technical assistance through the transfer of technology, the Conference urged closer technical co-operation among African States and a careful assessment of the appropriateness of the new technologies and equipment for economic and relevancy to national development. The member States were encouraged to include research and development in their activities in all areas of manpower development and effective utilization of material and equipment.

5. As the Conference was held during the Year of Cartography in Africa, it reviewed activities that had been undertaken or planned for the Year. The Conference urged governments of member States who had not organized commemorative activities to do so, and thereafter evaluate the impact of the commemorative activities undertaken for the Year.

6. In concluding its work, the Conference adopted resolutions 1/ addressing four major areas, namely:

(a) Public awareness, information systems, data base and publication of a technical review;

1/ The full text of the resolutions appear in the report of the Conference.

(b) Harmonization of activities in cartography and remote sensing, standardization of topographical specifications, and the establishment of a common geodetic and gravimetric datum for Africa;

(c) Manpower development, strengthening of cartographic institutions in Africa and research and development;

(d) Technical co-operation.

III. CONCLUSION

7. The deliberations of the sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa recognized the fact that all countries in Africa were not at the same level of development, moreover not all of them carried out their own cartographic works. It emphasized the urgent need for resolute actions towards strengthening their infrastructure or set up those where they do not exist as well as orienting and integrating cartographic projects into national development strategies including actively playing their roles in monitoring the resurgency of natural factors that sparked off the current economic crises in Africa.

8. Therefore, the ECA Conference of Ministers is requested to examine the report of the sixth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Africa and endorse it so as to facilitate the implementation of the various recommendations contained in the report and its resolutions.